

Gallatin CAC 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. This year Gallatin joined the NY State Climate Smart Community program. A new committee was formed, as a subcommittee of the CAC, to manage this program participation. The town was already participating in the New York State Clean Energy program. These combined programs provide grants and incentives to promote clean energy, environmental resiliency and reduce or mitigate the impacts of Climate change.
2. In January 2023 the Gallatin CAC was awarded a small environmental restoration grant
3. Earth Day Weekend: Gallatin Conservation Area deer enclosure project, April 22

On Earth Day, the CAC hosted a half day deer enclosure build and invasive species removal project at the GCA. This project was funded by a Partners for Climate Action's (PCA) ecological restoration grant which we received in early 2023. CAC members, with the help of over a dozen town residents, helped clear *the area to be fenced of invasive plants and installed an 8 ft deer fence. See photo.*



In late summer the CAC returned and planted dozens of species missing from the forest understory to restore native biodiversity. In these few months, the diversity within the fenced area was already visibly improved. To learn more about the project, [please see this PCA newsletter](#) post.

We continue to monitor the fence and plan to highlight this project via public educational walks at the GCA.

Earth Day Weekend was also a Gallatin Clean Up Day. Despite the day becoming a rain event with yet more extreme and unprecedented rains, a number of residents managed to collect trash and it wasn't a total wash out.

4. The CAC continued efforts towards beginning an NRI
 - a. On May 15 a group of members participated in a DEC Sponsored workshop *Creating a Natural Resources Inventory* at Columbia Green Community College
 - b. Several Prospective NRI consultants have been identified. We are awaiting proposals and will interview these consultants.

- c. We have a rough budget and have determined a fundraising strategy to raise the necessary funds
5. The Gallatin CAC is currently working with our joint neighbors, Copake and Ancram, on the Punch Brook- Roe Jan watershed characterization project. The project will be published in 2024.
6. Participated in the Gallatin Climate Smart Communities' Solstice Community Solar Campaign event at Lake Taghkanic State Park (October 8)
7. In October the CAC wrote and distributed a Newsletter titled *To Mow or Not to Mow*
8. Completed CAC website, to be announced in early 2024
9. CAC ongoing training:
 - a. On February 22 a group of the CAC members watched an educational presentation regarding the impacts of deer abundance on our forests by Cornell professor Dr. Bernd Blossey.
 - b. On March 2 CAC members participated in a webinar titled *Introduction to Hudson Valley Habitats and Biodiversity Conservation (ARCHIVED Recordings and links for more information on this presentation is available for anyone interested. Please reach out to a CAC member.)*

From tidal wetlands to grasslands, large forests, and rocky crests, the Hudson Valley is home to diverse habitats that support abundant fish, wildlife, and plant species, and provide numerous benefits to local communities. Despite comprising just 10% of the state's land area, the Hudson Valley supports nearly 90 percent of the bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species that live in New York.

Local governments have significant authority in determining land use and conserving natural resources. This webinar presented:

- *key characteristics of major Hudson Valley habitats, their importance to common and imperiled species, and current threats;*
- *the benefits of intact habitats for Hudson Valley communities;*
- *biodiversity conservation principles;*
- *existing state and federal protections; and*
- *local strategies for conserving nature through land-use planning, policy, and decision-making.*

- c. On April 29 members of the CAC gathered to watch Doug Tallamy present *Planning for Nature in Your Community* presented by Homegrown National Park

PLANS FOR 2024

- Complete fundraising for the NRI, hire an NRI consultant and begin the NRI
- Plan and host educational events around Gallatin Conservation area deer exclosure and native planting restoration project
- Host education walks in the spring and summer. We plan to host a forest ecology walk at Lake Taghkanic State Park in late spring and are in the process of planning other educational outreach opportunities.
- Conduct a trail work day at Lake Taghkanic State Park
- Meet monthly in person on the second Monday of the month
- Send out quarterly educational newsletters on conservation related matters
- Continue to advise the Town on conservation related matters and support the Climate Smart Committee
- Collaborating with other local towns on programs and education
- Find ways to support preserving existing farms
- Organize best management practice presentations on stormwater management, riparian buffer management and mowing for biodiversity